

Who can I call for information?

Call the L&I office nearest you if you have questions or need information about the investigation.

Everett 425-290-1422

Seattle 206-515-2821

Spokane 509-324-2610

Tacoma 253-596-3888

Tumwater 360-902-5477

Yakima 509-454-3750

*Upon request, foreign language support and formats for persons with disabilities are available.
Call 1-800-547-8367. TDD users, call 360-902-5797.
L&I is an equal opportunity employer.*

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When a loved one dies at work

Where to turn for help and answers



Our pledge to you

If you are reading this brochure, someone you love died from a job-related injury or illness. We are sorry for your loss and suffering.

This is a very emotional time for you. It is also a time when the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) by law must investigate your loved one's death. We pledge to carry out this responsibility in a professional and sensitive manner. We will keep you informed about the investigation to the extent you want and law allows.

If you have questions this pamphlet does not answer, please call us.



The Worker Memorial Garden at the Department of Labor & Industries in Tumwater, Washington, is dedicated to working men and women who lost their lives due to work-related injury or illness.

**L&I investigates workplace deaths.
What does this involve?**

L&I's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) conducts the investigation and tries to reconstruct the circumstances that led to the death. A major focus is determining whether the employer was protecting his or her workers by adhering to workplace safety and health rules at the time. Rule violations may or may not relate to the death.

The inspector will collect evidence through on-site analysis and interviews with the employer, co-workers and managers, and by gathering relevant documents, such as safety plans or training manuals.

The inspection will determine whether any violations occurred and whether financial penalties apply. Criminal charges against an employer are rare. If they are filed, we will let you know.

How long will the investigation take?

L&I will complete the investigation within six months, although it could be sooner.

How do I stay informed?

You will receive a letter from L&I that provides contact information — someone you can call if you have questions or want to know the progress of the investigation.

The back of this pamphlet lists six main L&I offices. If you need help before you receive the letter, please call the office nearest you.

Who sees the investigation results?

L&I will contact you when the investigation is done and give you a copy of the citation. The complete case file is available if you request it from L&I's Public Records Unit at PublicRecords@Lni.wa.gov or 360-902-5556.

By law, the report is also available to the deceased worker's employer, union representatives if the worker belonged to a union, and attorneys representing any of the parties but not to the general public or news media.

What information does L&I release to the news media?

A workplace death may draw media attention. Typically, L&I's Public Affairs Office will confirm an investigation and release the name of the employer. The media usually receives no other information until the investigation concludes. At that time, L&I may issue a news release. News coverage raises awareness of work hazards and could protect other workers from injury or death.



Survivor benefits

If you are the surviving spouse or dependent of a worker who has died of a workplace injury or occupational disease, you may be eligible for a monthly survivor pension from the state's workers' compensation program.

You may also need to apply to receive both an immediate cash benefit and a burial payment.

If you have not been contacted by L&I's Pension Benefits Section, please call 360-902-5119 right away to find out how to apply. For more information about pension benefits, visit www.Lni.wa.gov/Pensions.

Do other benefits apply?

- You may be eligible for Social Security benefits. You must apply no later than 30 days after your loved one passed away.
Online: www.ssa.gov | Call: 1-800-772-1213
- Veteran benefits may be available if the deceased worker was an active or retired member of the military or an honorably discharged veteran.
Online: www.va.gov | Call: 1-800-827-1000
- Life insurance benefits may be available from the employer, a union affiliation or an individual policy.



Other authorities

- The local law enforcement agency normally responds when a workplace death occurs and may contact relatives and the coroner or medical examiner.
- Law enforcement and the medical examiner issue reports. These reports are independent of L&I's investigation, although they may be provided to L&I.
- When an autopsy is performed, next of kin can ask the coroner or medical examiner to provide the completed report. Next of kin also choose the funeral home to receive the body.
- The funeral home director files the death certificate with the county where the death occurred. He or she can provide certified copies of the death certificate to the next of kin on request.

